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Messengers to report for '99 state convention

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

Messengers from the nearly 2,000 cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention (MBC) will fill the sanctuary of First Church, Jackson, beginning October 26 for the convention's 164th annual session.

High on the "to-do" list for messengers will be election of a new MBC president. Dean Register, pastor of Temple Church, Hattiesburg, will complete his second one-year term and is not eligible for re-election.

The election of the new president is scheduled for 10:40 a.m. on October 26. The result of that balloting will be announced at 1:50 p.m. on October 26, followed by a second ballot if needed.

Other MBC offices up for election during this year's session include:

♦ First Vice-President, currently held by Ken Rhodes, director of missions for Pearl River Association in Picayune. Rhodes is completing his second term and is not eligible for re-election.

♦ Second Vice-President, currently held by Paul Blanchard, director of missions for Winston Association in Louisville. Blanchard is completing his second term and is not eligible for re-election.

♦ Recording Secretary, currently held by retired pastor Gus Merritt of Newton. There is no term limit for this office.

♦ Assistant Recording Secretary, currently held by Michael Weeks, pastor of Pleasant Hill Church, Olive Branch. There is no term limit for this office.

Messengers will also consider a proposed Mississippi Cooperative Program (CP) budget for the year 2000 that totals a record \$28,083,349.

The proposed CP budget is divided into four areas. Southern Baptist Causes is slated

to receive \$10,390,839 (37%). Shared responsibilities-MBC Matching Portion will receive \$810,000 (2.88%). Mississippi Institutions and Agencies will receive \$7,096,375 (25.27%). Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) will receive \$9,786,135 (34.85%).

Under the proposed 2000 CP budget, if giving should exceed the established budget amount then four areas will receive prearranged percentages: Christian education (50%), international missions (30%), North American missions (10%), and Mississippi missions (10%).

The proposed 2000 CP budget will be presented to messengers during the first business session at 2:25 p.m. on October 26 by Gary Richardson, chairman of the MBCB budget committee and pastor of First Church, West Point. The budget will be voted on by messengers during the second business session at 9:40 a.m. on October 27.

Randall W. Turner, pastor of First Church, Laurel, will deliver the convention sermon at 4 p.m. on October 26. Calvin Miller, professor of preaching and pastoral studies at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, will present the Bible Treasures during the annual meeting.

For information on serving as a messenger to the 1999

Mississippi Baptist Convention annual meeting, members of cooperating churches should contact their church office.

Pointing the way



Workers for Rainbow Signs of Jackson put the finishing touches on new signage being installed on the east side of the Baptist Building in downtown Jackson. The backlit signage — the first update to the building's exterior identification since construction was completed in 1968 — features the new logo and lettering recently adopted as the symbol of Mississippi Baptists. The 164th session of the Mississippi Baptist Convention will take place October 26-27 at First Church, Jackson. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

William Carey College receives endowment

Long-time philanthropist and business leader Wiley Fairchild of Hattiesburg announced on October 13 the donation of \$250,000 to Baptist-affiliated William Carey College (WCC) in Hattiesburg for the establishment of the J. Ralph Noonkester Endowed Professorship of History.

This gift, the latest in a long history of giving to WCC by the Fairchild family, honors Noonkester's service as WCC president and particularly his role in giving birth to the school's campus on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Noonkester is now retired.

"This endowed chair is in recognition of the distinct contribution of President Emeritus J. Ralph Noonkester in the establishment of Carey on the Coast," Fairchild said.

Fairchild requested that the first occupant of the endowed

chair be Myron Noonkester, current chair of the department

of history and social science at WCC, and son of Ralph and

Naomi Noonkester.

According to J. Ralph Noonkester, Fairchild and his late brother Rodney played a significant role in obtaining the former Gulf Coast Military Academy property.

Larry Kennedy, current president of WCC, commented, "We are very grateful to Mr. Fairchild and his family for their long-lived support of our mission. It is through the generosity of Mr. Fairchild and other supporters who share our mission that Carey is able to answer its charge to provide quality, Christ-centered higher education in South Mississippi."

"Today we honor Mr. Fairchild's commitment to all of our efforts here at Carey."

Fairchild, who served three terms on the WCC board of trustees, is a member of Main Street Church, Hattiesburg.



RESPONDING TO THE GIFT — Ralph Noonkester, president emeritus of William Carey College (left), responds to the announcement of the establishment of the J. Ralph Noonkester Endowed Professorship of History on the steps of the Fairchild Administration Building on the WCC Gulf Coast campus. Listening are, from the right, Myron Noonkester, Jennie Noonkester, WCC president Larry Kennedy, and Naomi Noonkester. (BR special photo)

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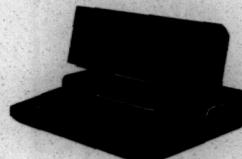
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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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Perkins Jr.**

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The month of October for Mississippi Baptists is, among a host of other activities, the time when many of the 68 county and multi-county associations hold their annual meetings around the state.

Baptist associations are a unique part of our denominational life, providing a bridge between local churches and the larger state and national conventions. Associations are created and maintained by church congregations who want to further the work of the Lord in their local areas.

Like Southern Baptists at every level, these local churches realize banding together results in greater evangelistic returns. So important to Kingdom work are associations that Mississippi Baptists have seen fit to provide a yearly stipend/subsidy to many associations through the state's Cooperative Program.

Anyone familiar with Southern Baptists knows there's no denominational requirement compelling local churches to come together for this type of missions work. They do it because they want to see everyone around them come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, and they feel the associational structure is the ideal way to do that.

As a matter of fact, the first Baptist association preceded the organization of the state Baptist convention and even the granting of Mississippi statehood. Associations have always been a powerful way to reach lost people.

Report after report of activities is given to the Baptists assembled for the annual meeting in one of the association's member churches, more often than not with a gleam in the eye of the presenter that is unmistakable, telegraphing the message that these folks believe they are on mission for the Lord and really — really — loving every minute of it.

Like virtually every facet of Baptist life, Mississippi Baptists are involved in associational activities in outsize proportions when compared to larger, more populous Southern

Baptist states.

Associations manage projects almost too numerous to list: church starts, missions, benevolences, literacy programs, food banks, clothing warehouses, Christmas toy ministries, crisis pregnancy intervention, disaster relief, and addiction recovery, to name just a few.

Associations are often on the leading edge of what is to come. When futurists correctly forecasted that the number missions volunteers would explode in the coming years, associations were there in a big way.

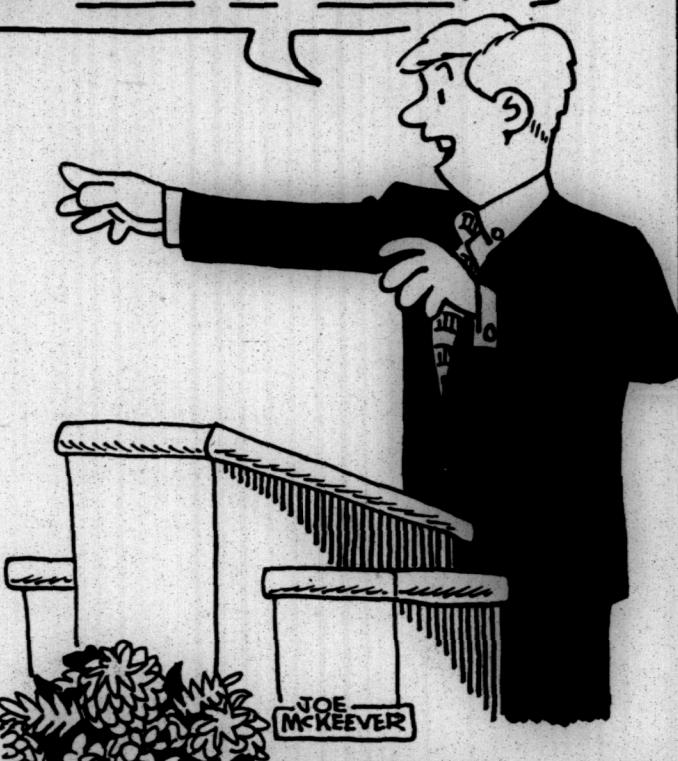
Lebanon Association in Hattiesburg, for example, has difficulty not in convincing people to go on association-sponsored missions trips, but in booking enough trips to accommodate all the volunteers who want to go.

Messengers to Prentiss Association's 1999 annual meeting in Booneville approved a sizable increase in their partnership missions budget for next year — this from an association that already posts a better annual baptism ratio (a measure of the number of church members it takes to win one person to Christ) and a significantly greater per capita giving rate than the Southern Baptist Convention as a whole.

If one spends a little time around association work and gets involved with these folks in their ministries, it's easy to conclude that this is a place where the hands-on work of the Lord is experiencing a manifold increase.

More and more Mississippi Baptists are getting involved in associational missions for good reason, but every Mississippi Baptist

FOLKS, IF YOU THINK IT'S GREAT LIVING IN MISSISSIPPI, YOU OUGHT TO CHECK OUT THE STATE OF GRACE!



needs to know more about the programs of their associations. Ask your pastor how to get involved in your local association's ministries, and find out how to get in touch with your associational director of missions.

Here's to Mississippi's Baptist associations and their long history of doing more than their fair share to help bring Mississippi and the world to Jesus. Keep up the good work!

Adapted and updated from an editor's notebook commentary originally published on October 17, 1996. Reprinted by request.

GUEST OPINION:

The challenges we face

By Dean Register, president
Mississippi Baptist Convention

When CBS news anchor Walter Cronkite expressed his farewell after decades of broadcasting he said, "I have merely been a highly visible member of a most superb team." I can identify with his sentiment. As president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention I have simply been a public representative of a superb team of committed Christians throughout our state. The responsibility has been more demanding than I anticipated, but the joy has been far more rewarding than I expected. Thank you for your fervent prayers and faithful encouragement.

As I prepare to pass the torch to my successor there are several challenges that Mississippi Baptists must face for the cause of Christ.

The first is the challenge of spiritual mediocrity. There is a real and present danger that we will become company people rather than kingdom people. The beguiling tendency is to enthrone the traditions of men and ignore the rigorous demands of kingdom sacrifice. Jesus did not water down his call in order to accommodate our ecclesiastical conveniences. Nearly 2000 years ago he told his disciples to give priority

allegiance of his kingdom and to take up a cross in pursuit of his glory. I fear that we might succumb to the temptation of sloth. I worry that we might blissfully nap in the lighthouse while millions perish against jagged rocks of despair.

Spiritual mediocrity lulls us into a false security, but it also incurs the prophetic rebuke, "Woe to those who are at ease in Zion" (Amos 6:1). The antidote to the slow poison of mediocrity is found in Paul's prescription to the Romans when he wrote, "never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord" (12:11).

Another challenge looming ahead involves the appealing lure of gambling. The tentacles of the gaming industry have already clutched virtually

every area of our state government. The nature of the industry is ravenous. Gambling is economic kudzu. It overwhelms, consumes, and devours. It has the potential to monopolize fiscal policy and, like the beast of Revelation, to dominate supply and demand.

I realize the gambling industry is here to stay, but I am bothered by the ethical and moral maze that it has introduced to a new generation of citizens. As Mississippi Baptists we must be authentic in our love and concern for those who work in the casinos. Many of them have no choice. We must also be vigilant in our quest to live by God's standard instead of the world's.

A final challenge that we face is that of intellectual isolationism. The early Christians engaged

their culture in debating the key issues of life and death, heaven, and hell. Peter spoke out boldly before the Sanhedrin. Stephen offered a brilliant defense of his faith. Paul often reasoned with skeptics and disputed the cynics of Asia Minor. T. R. Glover, the renowned Cambridge historian, concluded that the early Christians not only "out-lived and out-died the pagans; they out-thought the pagans also."

We must resist the urge to become rabbit-hole believers who run and hide when threats arise. Indeed we have been commissioned as lambs among wolves, but we can be fearless lambs who follow the faithful Shepherd.

A new millennium is barely 10 weeks away. May we go courageously into a new era filled with the Holy Spirit and embracing the truth of God's Word. Above all may we put on the full armor of God to withstand the schemes of the Adversary. I will be forever grateful for the honor of leading Mississippi Baptists during the final two years of this century, but I believe the best is yet to be. We serve a mighty God!

Register is pastor of Temple Church, Hattiesburg.

Kan. fields ready for Hispanic spiritual harvest

SUBLETTE, Kan. (BP) — In a small town in southwest Kansas, neighbors are reaching out to neighbors and, in the process, transcending cultural barriers.

At Sublette (Kan.) Southern Baptist Church, basically two congregations exist in one building. One group primarily speaks English and the other speaks Spanish. Yet they both function harmoniously together and are actually bridging the gaps between the two cultures and becoming a stronger congregation as they reach people for Jesus.

"It started out difficult, but after three years, God has blessed us," said Enrique Bluvan, pastor of Sublette's Hispanic church. "But when you see one Mexican and one Anglo washing dishes side by side, well, I love it. God has blessed us."

Abraham Aldape, former pastor of the church in Sublette and now director of Hispanic work for the Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists, understands the challenges of reaching the growing number of Hispanics coming into Kansas and Nebraska.

"God is helping these people see they have a mission field outside their front door," Aldape said. "We can fly over an ocean, but what are we doing to reach people here? The mission field is right here."

Sublette's Bluvan is an example of what it will take to reach many of the people from Mexico settling in this country. Born in Chihuahua, Mexico, he immigrated to the United States and accepted Jesus in 1981. Later he felt called to reach other people from Mexico by going into the ministry full time.

As people are growing in the Lord, pastors and other church leaders are going to have to raise up more people from their own congregations who feel called to serve in the ministry," Aldape said.

In three years of establishing a work that specifically reaches out to the Mexican families moving into Sublette, the church has seen amazing growth in a town of 1,500 residents, nearly 350 of whom have Hispanic roots. In the first



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE — Today, Enrique Alvarado stands in front of this church building where Iglesia Bautista Nueva Vida calls home in Liberal, Kan. But in the days ahead, Alvarado looks forward to seeing a new church building stand on the property the church recently purchased. (BP photo)

year of establishing a Hispanic church, 20 people attended the church. In the second year, the number grew to 35, and in the third year, the number is now close to 50 people each week.

Step outside the church building and you immediately see a small mobile home park. It is in areas like this that Bluvan is finding hurting people, each searching for answers and needing someone to tell them the good news that Jesus loves them.

In the mobile home park, Bluvan found Roland Chavarria returning home from his job at the Case Tractor dealership, located directly across the field from his home. Recently, Roland and his wife, Martha, began attending Bluvan's church. Martha led the way by attending a Bible study and then convinced Roland to attend as well.

"At first I made excuses not to go, but she kept bugging me, so I gave up and went to church," Chavarria said.

On his first day at church, Chavarria recalled listening to the words being spoken, but his mind was miles away. Then the music started and it immediately got his attention. He's been faithful ever since.

Hearing hymns in Spanish opened his eyes and suddenly the sermons began making sense as well. Going to church became a habit for Chavarria.

"Since I have been going to

church, I have made changes in my life," he said. "The church has done some wonderful things for me, including helping me stop doing some of the things I was doing, including drinking."

"If I had not started attending church, I would probably be trying to find a drink or be somewhere I am not supposed to be," Chavarria said confidently of his church experience.

Success stories are being told all over southwest Kansas as other Mexican-born men with stories similar to Enrique Bluvan assume leadership roles as pastors and church leaders.

Enrique Alvarado pastors the Hispanic Southern Baptist church in Liberal, Kan. By taking a step of faith, Alvarado moved from a very stable pastorate in Texas to become pastor of a small church in this growing Kansas border town near Oklahoma.

"Through prayer, the Lord told me I needed to reach more Mexican people for Christ," Alvarado said. "I came to Liberal for a visit and saw the opportunity to grow in my ministry and reach people for Jesus."

His faithful work in reaching the growing Hispanic

population in Liberal has seen 35 people being baptized in four years. Attendance has grown from 36 to nearly 100 each week. Having outgrown their present building, the church recently bought property in another part of town and will begin building a new church soon.

The growth is simply miraculous, Aldape said of the work in Liberal. But he is quick to point out growth is still slow due to traditional Catholic influences. When you visit people, they say they are not interested because they are Catholic, although they may not have stepped into a Catholic church since childhood.

"Even after many accept Christ, they are slow to become baptized in fear of being excommunicated from the [Catholic] church," Aldape said. "Many believe in Christ but have to learn to trust Christ."

MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS



THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

Record THE BAPTIST

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Looking back

10 years ago

Over 700 college students from around the state gather at Alta Woods Church, Jackson for the 1979 Student Convention. Students approve a \$100,000 fund raising goal to send 90 students as summer missionaries in 1990.

20 years ago

Olive Church, Pearl River County, near Lumberton, dedicates its new educational wing. The addition includes a pastor's study, two Sunday School rooms, a nursery, and a library. The building is dedicated debt free. Dennis Allen is pastor.

50 years ago

Closing out his 15th anniversary as editor of The Baptist Record, A. L. Goodrich calls upon Mississippi Baptists to increase circulation of the state paper by 1,500. During his tenure as editor, circulation has grown from 4,001 to its present level of just over 64,500.

WARM GREETINGS — Abraham Aldape (left) shakes Martha Chavarria's hand outside her family's home in Sublette, Kan. Her husband, Roland (right) recently turned his life over to Christ and has been faithfully attending Sublette's growing Hispanic Southern Baptist congregation. (BP photo)

Walker to head BJC on Public Affairs

Brent Walker, general counsel of the Baptist Joint Committee (BJC) on Public Affairs for the last six years, has been selected as the new executive director of the church-state organization.

The agency's board of directors voted unanimously for Walker to replace James Dunn, who retired after 18 years. Dunn, whose tenure was marked by a stormy relationship between the agency and the Southern Baptist Convention, is now serving as president of the BJC Endowment and a visiting professor at Wake Forest Divinity School in Winston-Salem, N.C.

Walker was associate general counsel for four years before replacing Oliver "Buzz" Thomas as general counsel in 1993. Walker has a master of divinity degree from Southern Seminary and a law degree from Stetson University.

MD church ministers in shadow of steel mill

By Carl M. White
Associate Editor

A few blocks from the sprawling complex of Bethlehem Steel is the Dundalk community of Baltimore, Maryland. During the 1960's and 70's when tens of thousands of people worked in the steel mills, this was a thriving blue collar community. Annual fourth of July parades circled the park in the middle of the neighborhood, marching past memorials to the veterans of World Wars I and II. It was the kind of community the local draft board drew heavily from during the Vietnam conflict.

Now in the park there is a Vietnam memorial next to the older war monuments. The steel mill employs thousands less, and the Dundalk community has changed.

Gene Gunter grew up in the shadow of the steel mills as a Dundalk youth. After high school, he spent many years away serving in the United States Navy. However, a strong tug in his heart for his old neighborhood brought him back.

A few years ago while reading Rick Warren's book, *The Purpose Drive Church*, Gunter was moved by God to start a church in the Dundalk area. He wanted to start the church that next Easter, but he was unable to secure a meeting place that he could afford.

Standing in the park that is in the center of Dundalk, Gunter saw the covered pavilion. Since he could not find a building in which to meet, he decided God was leading him to start a church out-of-doors, in the park. On Easter Sunday, 1996, Crossroads Community Church was born.

"For six months we met here, in the Park, and we were blessed with good weather," Gunter said.

At times only a handful of people came, but being in the park attracted considerable attention. Many people out for a Sunday morning stroll worked their way over to the pavilion and the service being held there.

Soon there was a regular group of worshipers, a mixed group of the unemployed, and of community residents. However, winter was coming and Gunter knew they would have to find a place to meet.

"The weather started to turn cold and we needed a place, and God opened up a place, actually I like to say, within walking distance and eye sight of the park, which was good for us, and we were able to move there for the winter," he said.

The place God provided was a former shoe repair shop, one block down and across the street from the park. For three years now, the church has met in the store-

front building during the winter months, and under the park pavilion during the spring and summer months.

"Our church, I feel, is kind of unique," Gunter said. "We have visitors just about every week, but for us, a visitor coming through the door is normal. No one looks around and says 'there's someone new.'

"We have a wide range of people, from well-respected retirement people in

In addition, Gunter has had mission groups come in and hit the streets going door to door. There are thousands of doors to knock on in the Dundalk area. Going door to door is hard, long, and tedious work, but Gunter has found that it pays off.

"I have discovered that if we go to 1,000 homes and knock on the door in a week, we will have five visitors from our week's effort," he said.



ARRIVING TO MINISTER — Gene Gunter arrives at Crossroads Community Church in the Dundalk area of Baltimore, Maryland. Gunter, a native of the area, started the store-front church in a nearby park three years ago. (BR special photo)

their 70's, 80's, and even 90's, to homeless people, unemployed people, recovering alcoholics, and working people. Really, we have a wide mix of people, and I am just amazed at what God has done, and how wonderful it is that everyone is just able to come in and worship together," Gunter said.

The past couple of summers Gunter has had mission teams come to Dundalk to help in their ministry to the community. They have helped with Bible clubs and Vacation Bible School, and with a very active food closet ministry.

"We collect canned foods during the summer and store in our food closet, so we can have food to give out during the winter," Gunter said.

Gunter is excited about the prospects of the Mississippi — Maryland/Delaware partnership. His church has had the opportunity to obtain a building that formerly housed a Salvation Army thrift store. It will more than triple their current space, provide space for enlarged ministry and education programs, plus provide a higher visibility in the community.

Gunter believes Mississippi Baptists could be part of what God is doing in the shadow of the steel mill.

For information about partnership missions, contact the Partnership Mission Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box, 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone (601) 292-3398, or toll-free outside of Jackson (800) 746-1651.

Courses to be offered in Mississippi by NOBTS

October 25 begins the second of eight courses at nine locations in Mississippi sponsored by New Orleans Seminary.

The total eight courses are: Song Leading; Worship Planning; Reading Music: Rhythm/Pitch; Reading Music: Harmony/Melody; Hymnology; Music Administration/Staff Relations; Survey of Music Resources; and Class Voice. These courses are designed to provide basic training for bivocational music directors and other music leaders in churches.

The eight courses meet two hours per week. Each course is eight weeks in length.

The cycle of courses is scheduled over a two-year period. Each course is independent and has no prerequisite. Each student who completes the eight courses earns a Church Music Certificate from New Orleans Seminary plus a credit of eight hours toward an on-campus degree program. There is a one-time registration fee of \$25. The cost of each course is \$75.

Scholarships are available for first-time students. Students already enrolled are not eligible. The grant is limited to one person per church.

The second course "Worship Planning" will meet once a week for two hours for eight

consecutive weeks at the following locations and times:

- Calvary Church, Greenville — beginning Oct. 25 (7-9 p.m.) Dave Tribble, teacher.

- Broadmoor Church, Jackson — beginning Oct. 25 (7-9 p.m.) Jimmy McCaleb, teacher.

- First Church, Columbus — beginning Oct. 25 (7-9 p.m.) Bobby Sanderson, teacher.

- First Church, Purvis — beginning Oct. 25 (6:30-8:30 p.m.) James Hayes, teacher.

- First Church, Booneville — beginning Oct. 25 (7-9 p.m.) LuAnne Ford, teacher.

- Northcrest Church, Meridian — beginning Oct. 25 (6:30-8:30 p.m.) Buddy

McElroy, teacher.

- Hernando Church, Hernando — beginning Oct. 25 (7-9 p.m.) Barry Tweedy, teacher.

- Bay Vista Church, Biloxi — beginning Oct. 26 (7-9 p.m.) Bob Chichester, teacher.

- Tri-County Associational Building, Columbia — beginning Nov. 2 (6:30-8:30 p.m.) James Hayes, teacher.

These classes could be offered at other locations in the state also, where 10-12 students are interested in enrolling.

For more information, contact Julius Thompson, 117 Napa Valley Circle, Madison, MS 39110. Telephone (601) 856-4341.

Blue-ribbon committee set to study BFM

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP) — What does the future hold for Southern Baptists' historic "Baptist Faith and Message" document? The answer to that question will unfold in the coming months as a blue-ribbon committee appointed by Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Paige Patterson goes about its work.

The committee, authorized in June by SBC messengers, was assigned the task of reviewing the doctrinal statement "with the responsibility to report and bring any recommendations to this meeting next June in Orlando."

The statement, originally adopted in 1925, was revised in 1963, reducing the number of articles from 25 to 17. The only change to the 1963 statement came last year when SBC messengers adopted an amendment on the family. While not an official creed, most Southern Baptists regard the "Baptist Faith and Message" as a general statement of basic Baptist beliefs.

Patterson announced appointment of the study committee in August, naming three-time SBC president Adrian Rogers to head the 15-member committee.

The committee includes two former SBC

presidents, two seminary presidents, the head of the SBC Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, and the wife of the SBC Annuity Board president. It also includes the individual who made the motion to study the document.

The make-up of the committee is significantly different from one appointed by SBC President Herschel Hobbs in 1962. Hobbs named the sitting presidents of each state convention to the committee, which presented its report in 1963.

"What we had then was a serious group of leaders who were all the presidents of the state conventions," recalled Wayne Ward, an advisor to the 1963 committee. Ward, a retired professor at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., said Hobbs viewed that appointment process as the best way to "have a representative committee."

"You didn't have a hand-picked committee like this one is," Ward added.

Despite that fact, others say the current committee is equally representative of Southern Baptists today. "I think you see a very good representation of current Southern Baptist leaders and pastors and

others," said committee member Albert Mohler, president of Southern Seminary. "I believe the vast mainstream multitude of Southern Baptists will be very pleased with any recommendations which may come from this committee."

When he announced the committee appointments, Patterson said he did "not anticipate even beginning to approximate a rewrite" of the faith statement.

"Most folks feel, 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it,'" Patterson said.

While describing the "Baptist Faith and Message" as an "undeniably fabulous statement," he added that the committee will be "free to proceed with whatever recommendations they wish to make."

Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Church in Cordova, Tenn., said he hopes the document will be given a thorough study and that it will either be "left exactly as it is, which would be wonderful if we agree to that premise" or that it will be "clarified and strengthened."

While Rogers said he is "happy with it the way it is," he added, "I don't think there is anything that can't be improved with study."

Lottery defeat credited to Ala. churches

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP) — Alabama voters rejected a state lottery Oct. 12 following an unprecedented and aggressive movement by the state's churches.

With 98% of the precincts reporting, the vote was 663,988, or 54%, against and 559,377, or 46%, in favor.

"The reason we won is the churches," said Jim Cooper of Citizens Against Legalized Lottery.

Cooper, who emerged late in the anti-lottery campaign, led opposition efforts through television advertising as well as through the churches.

"This issue was for our state and our families," he said. "This is a great state, but there is never a right way to do wrong."

Joe Bob Mizzell, head of Christian ethics at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said Anti-Gambling Sunday on Sept. 19 also made a difference. "The churches went to work after that and responded to all the materials we provided," he said.

AN OPEN LETTER TO GOVERNOR VENTURA

Dear Governor Ventura,

I am writing concerning your recent remarks about religion. I have often wondered about your religious background and how you felt about religion — now I know.

Although I am not a recipient of the magazine in which your interview appeared, I have read your remarks as reported by other media outlets. I want you to know that I fully agree that you should have the right to express your ideas regardless of whether I, or anyone else, may agree or disagree with them.

I also agree that the people of Minnesota have the right to choose whomever they wish to be their governor. Certainly, here in Mississippi, we have chosen some interesting people to lead us through the years. Furthermore, I commend you that in this day of political cor-



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

rectness and forked-tongue speech, you would plainly express yourself.

Now concerning religion — I want you to know, though this may sound strange to you, I generally agree with your view. If it was reported correctly, you said that organized religion was just a "crutch" for weak-minded people. Please allow me to comment on two dimensions of your remark:

1. Organized religion is not always a good thing and in fact it can be a very bad thing. All through the ages it has been

easy for people to fall into a trap of religion that allows them to do religious activities and not truly be in touch with God. In fact, the Bible says that it is possible for us to have "a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof."

A close study of the life of Jesus might reveal that one of the reasons he had an ongoing and constant confrontation with the people of his day was because he recognized that they were playing a religious game that served as a mask for evil and did nothing at all to make a difference in their hearts. It was organized religion that led in the effort to crucify Jesus.

2. You are also right in your evaluation of what you referred to as weak-minded people needing a crutch. The Bible says that the very purpose that God sent his only Son into the world was for him to be our Savior, our enabler, and the "crutch" for our brokenness.

He came to all of us. Jesus did not just come to build great cathedrals, or to organize a new religion, but to heal our broken lives, to restore our warped thinking, and to do for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Since all of us have sinned, all of us need him. I, unashamedly, confess to you that I am one of those weak-minded people who found in Jesus Christ a new way of life. I could not and I would not want to go through life without him. I am thankful for the strength he gives me when I am weak, the guidance he gives me when I am unsure, and the blessings he brings to my life when I am so undeserving.

While I am not dependent upon organized religion to make a difference in my life, I am totally dependent upon Jesus Christ, God's wonderful, Heavenly "crutch" to lift me out of my sin and give me power to live.

It is the wonderful good news of Heaven that Jesus is ready, willing, and able to forgive us our sins and to give us an abundant life. He desires to come and work his miracle of new life in every one of us. All we have to do is turn from our sins and receive him as our Savior.

I have listened to you speak and have heard your comments about religion, but I have never heard you express your views concerning your personal relationship to God.

If you know the Lord, I pray that your life in him will grow stronger and deeper each day. If you do not know him, my prayer is that today you would recognize your need of him, be assured of his love for you, and trust him as your Savior. You will be glad you did.

God bless you!

Sincerely yours,
Jim Futral

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NAMES IN THE NEWS

Wilford M. Lee, pastor emeritus of First Church, Hilton Head Island, S. C., died Sept. 12 at the age of 86. Burial was in Little Rock, Ark. He pastored First Church, Leland, from 1947-57. Lee was a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southern Seminary. He is survived by his wife Marguerite of Hilton Head Island; son, Tommy of Louisville, Ky.; daughter, Eleita Trezevant of Beaufort, S. C., five grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Pleasant Hill Church, Union County, recently ordained Kenneth Hickey and Chris McCord as deacons. Pictured (from left) are Les Jones, pastor; McCord; Randy Rhinehart, former pastor; and Hickey.



Richmond Church, Lee Association, recently held ordination services for three new deacons. Pictured (from left) are Henry Jenkins; Keith Strawn, John Graham, and Michael Lindsey, new deacons; and Sean Tutor, pastor.

Staff changes

Newton and Scott Associations have called **Mike Everett** as director of missions, effective Aug. 17. Everett graduated from Mississippi College in 1973 and New Orleans Seminary in 1976. He has served in the ministry 30 years and previously served at Central Church, McComb.



North Columbia Church, Columbia, has called **James Bell**, as minister of education and music, effective Aug. 29. A native of Improve Community, Marion County, he received his education at Pearl River Community College, University of Southern Mississippi, and New Orleans Seminary. His previous place of service was Raleigh Church, Memphis.

Calvary Church, Columbia, has called **Chris Carter** as pastor effective Sept. 1. Carter is a native of Texas and has served churches in New Mexico, Texas, North Carolina, and Illinois. He is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist College.



Deacons of Pleasant Hill Church, Union County

Charles Roland King Sr., 71, a native of Jackson and pastor of Hopewell Church, Crystal Springs, since 1985, died of heart failure on Oct. 4 at Hardy Wilson Hospital, Hazlehurst. Services were held at First Church, Hazlehurst, on Oct. 6. King had been a Copiah County sheriff's deputy and chaplain. He was a graduate of Clarke College, Newton, and Great Plains Bible College. Survivors include wife, Merle; son, Jon Marc King, Hazlehurst; daughter, Cheryl Lynn Douglas, Hazlehurst;

father, Oary Thomas King, Hazlehurst; four grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. Memorials may be made to Hopewell Baptist Church, 2002 Hopewell Road, Crystal Springs, MS 39059.

Thomas Red was presented a plaque on Aug. 16 for serving as deacon for 50 years in Flaglake Church, Sarah. Pictured with Red (left) is Tom Dyer, pastor.



Red and Dyer

County, at the time of his death. He had previously pastored at Remus, Mt. Zion, Laurel Hill, and New Prospect churches in Leake County. He is survived by his wife, Sarah Scott, Carthage; son, Jessie Dale Scott, Carthage; daughter, Rebecca Thomas, Pearl; mother, Frances Scott, Walnut Grove; brothers, Randolph Scott and Carl Scott, both of Carthage; sister, Linda Pickel, Carthage; and two grandchildren.

HOECOMINGS

Ludlow, Ludlow: Oct. 24; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; lunch at noon in the Family Life Center; Don Wilson, former interim pastor, guest speaker; M. L. Wallace, pastor.

Highland, Crystal Springs: Nov. 7; Sunday School, 9 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.; covered dish lunch following services; 1 p.m., singing with Hosanna of Magee and First Light of Vicksburg, guest singers; Mark D. Jones, pastor.

McCool, McCool: Nov. 7; 11 a.m. followed by dinner on the grounds; Malcolm Byrd, pastor, speaker.

Bethel, Newton: Nov. 14; 160th anniversary; Gerald Martin, speaker; lunch at noon; Paul Oglesbee, pastor.

First, Coffeeville: Nov. 7; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; lunch served in Family Life Building; Jill Arrington Clark, music; Owen Riddick, guest speaker; Daniel Hathorne, pastor.

Evansville, Coldwater: Nov. 7; 10 a.m., singing and sermon; dinner in fellowship hall at noon; Bernette Fielder, guest speaker; Rick and Cheryl Martin, guest singers; David Worley, pastor.

Oak Grove, Carthage: Oct. 31; 10:30 a.m.; 107th anniversary; Keith Fulton, former pastor, now pastor of Mt. Carmel Church, Edinburgh, speaker; Sonrise group, Ron Fulton, Cindy Fulton Lee, and William Crenshaw, music; Paul H. Leber Sr., pastor.

New Hope, Sumrall: Oct. 24; 166th year; Gerald Aultman, morning speaker; Charles Broom, evening speaker, noon meal; Richard L. Hamilton, pastor.

Zion Hill, Wesson: Oct. 31; 10:45 a.m.; dinner in fellowship hall; Malcom Massey, former pastor, speaker; Tom McCormick, pastor.

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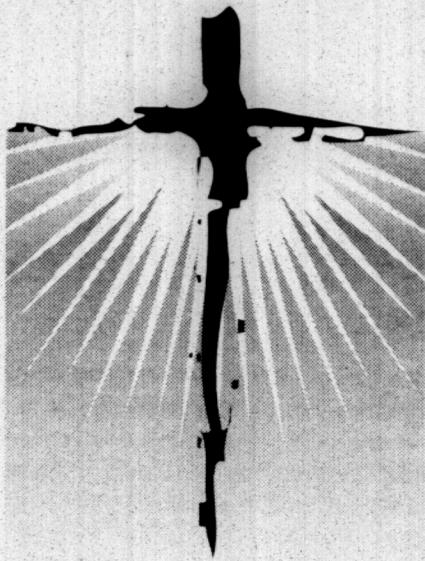
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MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST

Partnership Missions

FALL QUARTER 1999



VOL. I, NO. I

PURPOSE: TO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR VOLUNTEERS TO USE THEIR SKILLS TO WITNESS FOR CHRIST THROUGH MISSION PARTNERSHIPS.

◆ PARTNERSHIP MISSIONS DEPARTMENT ◆ P.O. Box 530, JACKSON, MS 39205-0530 ◆ PHONE 601-292-3398 ◆ FAX 601-292-3390 ◆ E-MAIL PHARRELL@MBCB.ORG

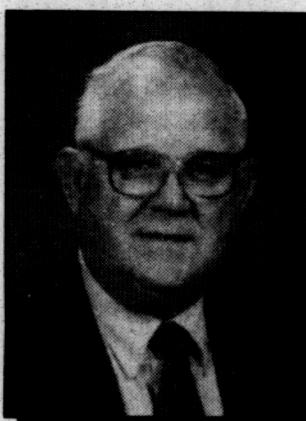
Tribute to Mackie Davis

The first time I met Mackie Davis was in a group discussing the establishment of a partnership between Mississippi Baptists and Honduras. Although new to some of us, Mackie had been a part of a group ministering in Honduras since the late 1970's. Even a casual conversation would soon reveal how deeply committed to missions he was and especially to the people of Honduras.

The partnership with Honduras became a reality and Mackie Davis became a volunteer consultant to help facilitate the initial groups that went under the new partnership. As the months and years went by his commitment and participation increased. In fact, his involvement was such that he became Volunteer Assistant Coordinator, and worked through the partnership office. The number of partnerships increased and Mackie took on the role of enlisting groups to participate in all

of them. His conviction was so strong that he determined that he would lead one team each year to each of our partners. This was no small effort since there were three official partnerships and he repeated groups to places where we had formerly had a linkage.

Another facet of the contribution of this man was his desire to see more churches and associations become a part. He was asked to lead his association (Lebanon) as Brotherhood Director which gave him a



Mackie Davis

hearing to a much wider area. Groups requested him to come and share the work and to help them organize to send teams. He promoted all of the areas of work, but Honduras was always foremost in his thinking.

The reader can perhaps now grasp how vital he was to Partnership Missions in Mississippi. Mackie was a good friend. We spent many hours together planning and evaluating the work and travelling to and from projects in which we had been involved. I miss him a great deal but rejoice in the knowledge that he is in a much better place. As the reader may have surmised, Mackie not only gave of himself, but he was generous with his own personal financial resources. As far as I am concerned, he was the epitome of a volunteer in missions and I give gratitude to God for his tremendous contribution.

— Bill Hardy
Partnership Missions Coordinator, Retired

In 1989 I felt the call to go on mission trips. I signed up and was scheduled to go to Venezuela, but the trip was canceled. Mackie, while recruiting for Honduras Missions, went by Temple Baptist Church and talked with Ken Hopkins, who was involved in Church Mission Activities. Ken told Mackie that I was interested in going on Mission trips. Mackie called me and then came by and left a video concerning Honduras missions. I reviewed the video, asked some questions, and signed up to go with him on his next trip. After going with him on several trips I became a team captain and organized a team from my church and have been leading teams ever since. Mackie was always reaching out to someone to recruit for Mission Teams. He dedicated much of his life to mission activites.

Mackie had a keen sense of humor. He snored so loudly that he often received complaints from other mission team members who slept near him. I heard him patiently explain to the complainer that what he had to do was go to bed early and go to sleep before he (Mackie) went to bed. Needless to say the complainer said nothing else.

Mackie, always trying to find ways to improve mission trips and their results, frequently called me and other teams and conferred on ideas to achieve better results.

— Norman Bailey
Temple Baptist Church
Hattiesburg

"Pat, who is the big guy pushing mission trips?" He answered, "I don't know, except someone called him Mackie." We were in a meeting of agricultural missions in the 1980's. The huge man speaking from the fifth row was recruiting people to make up teams to go on mission trips to Honduras. Later we learned his name was Mackie Davis.

During the two years we volunteered in Honduras, we came to appreciate and love the giant of a man. Few laymen affected missions more than Mackie Davis did by pushing missions.

Mackie was a gentle mover and shaker in volunteer missions. He had contacts near and far and he could persuade them to use their funds, talents, and time to share the love of Jesus Christ. Mackie was one of a kind with a big soft heart. He will be greatly missed.

— Pat and Ruth Rogers
Volunteers in Missions
Brandon

I had the privilege of meeting Mackie Davis earlier this year as we planned a trip to La Ceiba, Honduras, to build houses with the Mississippi Baptist Convention. He very soon became a friend, a brother in Christ, an individual who knew how to get things accomplished for the Kingdom of God.

We worked together in getting materials together to get the job done in Honduras. He was tireless in his efforts. He did not know the word "can't." Mackie Davis understood: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

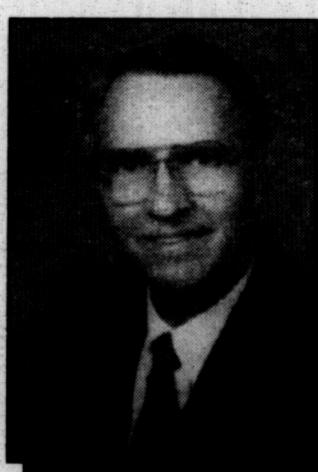
We had 22 men and women who were able to get much accomplished during our week in Honduras and many of the accomplishments were due to work "behind the scenes" of Mackie Davis.

Then my son, Nathan Riley, felt that God wanted him to spend a month in Honduras helping Archie and Virginia Crawford and the teams that would be there working. Mackie Davis made his vision become a reality.

An old country song asks the question, "Who's gonna fill their shoes?" I know God has someone to take Mackie Davis' place, but no one will fill his shoes.

Thanks Mackie for a job well done. You were a fine servant of the Lord.

— Perry Riley, pastor
Eastside Baptist Church
Marianna, Fla.



Paul Harrell

are now Team Captains and Team Leaders for mission projects. Mackie left for us a legacy that calls forth our greatest response to the mission needs of our world. He had a vast network of resource contacts. As needs surfaced from the mission field,

Mackie had a contact that could respond to that need. We affirm Sybil, Mackie's wife, and his family as they carry forward into the future such mission ministries. His spirit of concern and his love for people in need of the gospel is reflected in his willingness to go on many mission projects. Mackie, we miss you and we thank God for your life and the legacy you left for all Mississippi Baptists.

It is our intent to publish this newsletter each quarter. There is much that can be shared regarding Partnership Missions. The viability of this publication is dependent upon our Team Captains, Team Leaders and the host of volunteers providing us the appropriate information to make each issue inspirational, informational, and insightful. As you go, please record those moments of inspiration, human interest stories, and acts of God at work along with pictures where appropriate and send to the Partnership Missions Department. We need your help in making this the type of publication it needs to be to provide the type of communication we desire each quarter.



Pictured at Odessa Baptist Seminary from left are missionary Dale Ledbetter; Thomas and June Nolen, Partnership coordinators for Ukraine; and Gene Gillis, pastor of Cleary Baptist Church, Florence, who helped design projects for the partnership.

PARTNERSHIP AREA REPRESENTATIVES

Area	Name	Phone
1	John Perkins P.O. Box 381, Hernando, MS 38632	662-429-5033 (o) 662-429-3387 (h)
2	Jack Maroon P.O. Box 100, Belmont, MS 38827-0011	601-454-3380 (o) 601-454-3515 (h)
3	Frank Pevey 222 North Fourth, Cleveland, MS 38732	662-843-8798 (o) 662-846-5307 (h)
4	Bill Duncan 560 Willowbrook Rd., Columbus, MS 39701	662-328-6802 (o) 662-323-6448 (h)
5	David Raddin P.O. Box 780, Yazoo City, MS 39194-9557	601-746-2471 (o) 601-746-6565 (h)
6	Joe Abel 406 Ware Street, Carthage, MS 39051	601-267-4342 (o) 601-267-5288 (h)
7	John McBride P.O. Box 201, Hazlehurst, Ms 39083	601-894-2024 (o) 601-894-4377 (h)
8	Kenneth Stringer P.O. Box 1722, Collins, MS 39428-1772	601-765-6683 (h)
9	Kiely Young P.O. Box 10254, Gulfport, MS 39505	228-831-9236 (h)

Witnessing in Ukraine

The video crew was shooting a beautiful sunset behind a wheat harvest somewhere in the Ukraine countryside.

As they filmed, the harvest manager approached to ask what they were doing. Pastor Michael Anatolyevich Pishtoy, pastor of Delgorod-Dnestrovsky Baptist Church, later told the group that the manager was suspicious that the crew might be there to burn his field.

Michael told the manager they were shooting a video for an evangelistic project.

"What does your movie have to do with my wheat field," asked the manager.

Michael tried to trace the parallels between the field and the world. "You are collecting this harvest and another field represents the world which is ready to be harvested. Jesus Christ is ready to come collect his followers."

Michael said he told the man to accept Jesus Christ to be in the harvest. "He thought for a bit and left without a word," said Michael, who noted that does not mean the man dis-

agreed, but that he would be thinking about it.

In another area, the crew stayed the night in a hotel. That night the clerk found that foreigners were staying and asked Michael why he didn't tell her.

He explained that he knew they would charge more and that the group was like brothers, traveling together.

Michael said he had traveled in Germany and people are charged according to the conditions of the accommodations. "Here there are no conditions," he said, giving the woman some money for tea.

But he couldn't leave without telling her about Christ. She asked what church they represented. "I said the gospel is the basis of our faith and I told her how I came to Christ. She had to accept Jesus Christ into her heart and live in God's family."

The woman agreed that someday she would have to make that decision.

Michael said that when people accept Jesus Christ and live the gospel principles, then they could test the religious organiza-

Funds needed to build Ukrainian churches

For hundreds of square miles north of Odessa, Ukraine, there are no Baptist churches, and few other evangelical congregations. Ukrainian Baptists want to remedy that.

For years they have been praying for the chance to grow new churches and they believe the time is now.

Mississippi Baptists have been invited to help them grow these new churches. The Mississippi Partnership with Ukraine had opened that door.

In fact, one Ukrainian leader said that he believes that Mississippi Baptists are God's answer to their prayers. He added that if they were not, the Ukrainians would find others who are.

The way Mississippi Baptists beginning in the year 2000 will be helping is both financial and labor intensive.

The Ukrainians have selected nine towns, each of which have about 50 villages surrounding them. A Ukrainian church planter family will move to each of the towns. Mississippi Baptists will help buy a house after a group of 10 or more baptized believers have been constituted into a church.

Construction volunteers will be needed to adapt the houses to accommodate volunteer groups coming to those towns since public hotels are scarce in these areas.

In each area, the schedule calls for crusades, Bible schools, and gospel suppers.

For the suppers, the church planter invites a group of neighbors over for supper and a Bible study.

Anonymous donors in Mississippi have given money for the printing of

Ukrainian language tracts, New Testaments, and Bibles for the project.

Other Ukrainian partnership projects include a three-day pastors' conference, a women's church leader conference, and the continuation of a youth Bible camp which is operated by the Ilichosk Baptist Church.

Each of the nine Ukrainian areas has been assigned to a Mississippi area. Nine partnership representatives have volunteered to help raise the cash needed for the property and church planters and to recruit volunteer teams. Their names are listed in the box at left.

We are challenging each Mississippi area to provide basic financial support in starting these new churches. Following is the proposed support needed for the year 2000:

- \$1200 – travel expenses for church planter family
- \$1500 – monthly crusade events and rental of facilities
- \$15,000 – house for a church, provide a residence for church planter family, and lodging for volunteer teams.
- \$1500 – scholarship to Odessa Baptist Seminary for church planter
- \$500 – contingency per mission church
- \$19,000 – total for 1st year
- \$4700 – total for 2nd year
- \$4200 – total for 3rd, 4th, and 5th years



These Ukrainian kids are among participants in a VBS held at Odessa Baptist Seminary by Mississippi volunteers.

In one town where Michael knew a group of Baptists were meeting somewhere, he stopped in a church of another denomination, asking where were the believers in town. "Not here," the people said, "at the other end of the village."



A glimpse at Vladimir Shemchisin

Vladimir Shemchisin is pastor of Illichosk Baptist Church in an Odessa suburb of Ukraine.

He has just been named president of the Odessa Baptist Seminary, and Ukrainian Baptist leaders have charged him with developing church work in the region called the Odessa Oblast.

One story about Shemchisin helps paint a picture of his evangelistic interests.

In 1983, Shemchisin took his wife and two children, voluntarily to Yakutsk, a town in Siberia. He went, although his parents and his wife's mother disagreed, and no one gave their blessing or appointed or prayed for him.

He took a big bag of Christian literature with him. Shortly after he arrived, the KGB took it away. A week later, they returned it to him.

He only left after neighbors told him his pregnant wife needed to have her baby where there were better medical facilities.

When he arrived, only one Christian believer lived in the town. Three years later, he left 24 believers. Now, he said, as far as he

knows, there are 200 in the church.

Said Shemchisin of the partnership, "We have a lot of work to do and not enough power. In Mississippi a lot of people are glad and ready to come here and join us. I think this partnership is a blessing for Mississippi and Ukraine as well."

Partnership Missions Celebration

November 12-13, 1999 • Jackson

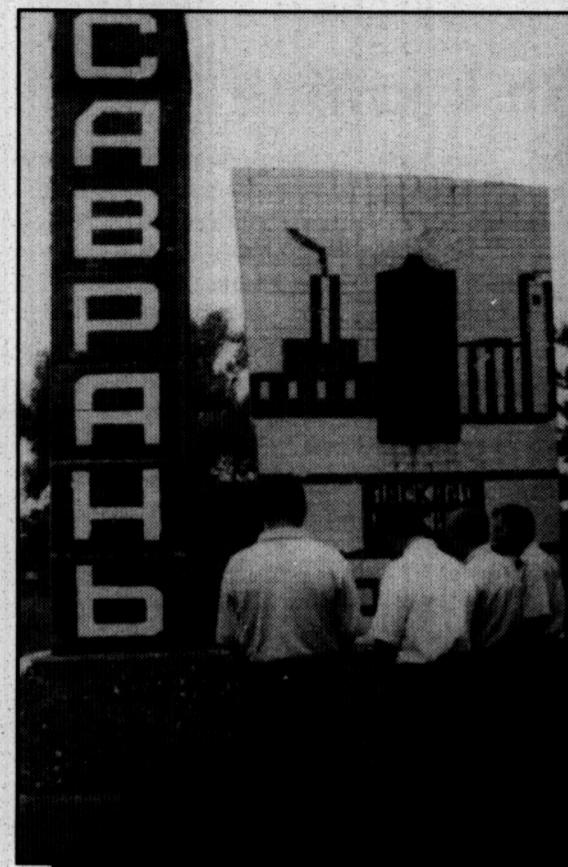
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Vladimir Shemchisin



Praying for Savran

At each of the nine villages, the video crew and Ukrainian ministers stopped to pray before entering to shoot video. Bronislav Voytovich Zilkovsky, pastor at Berezovka Baptist Church, recounted a story told to him by an old man that took place in the 1930's. The man's group was witnessing in different villages. They stopped at the sign of each village and prayed before entering. In one of the villages, it was raining. They got wet, saw several houses in another village and went into it without praying first. The old man told Bronislav that in the villages where they stopped and prayed, you could see churches. Where they did not pray, there were no churches, despite many evangelistic groups going there.

Partnership Missions Department Update January 1 through September 30

Maryland/Delaware

- 11 Maryland/Delaware associations linked with 16 Mississippi Baptist associations
- 42 projects
- 390 mission volunteers
- \$39,000 invested in ministries
- \$100,000 travel costs

Honduras

- 13 construction teams
- 15 medical/dental teams
- 660 mission volunteers
- 4,104 professions of faith
- 50 houses constructed
- 25,539 patients seen - medical

- 3,784 patients seen - dental
- 93,191 prescriptions filled
- 10,188 Bibles distributed
- \$579,399 dollars invested in medical/dental ministry
- \$455,310 travel costs

Ukraine

- 6 projects
- 61 mission volunteers
- 105 professions of faith
- 1,000 Bibles distributed
- \$81,800 dollars invested in ministries
- \$98,033 travel costs

Maryland/Delaware partnership: one old line convention helping another

By Carl M. White

Associate Editor of *The Baptist Record*

As Mississippi Baptists move into the three year partnership with Maryland/Delaware Baptists, some wonder why the focus on an established state convention that is as old as our own?

Charles Barnes, executive director of the Maryland/Delaware Baptist Convention, realizes that as far as age is concerned, they would be considered an old state convention, having been founded in 1835, a decade before the organization of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845.

"Maryland/Delaware is considered an old line state, but we have the population density and the needs of a new state convention," Barnes said.

"Therefore, we began to forge a partnership that would allow a strong state convention -- like Mississippi -- to support a state convention that has tremendous need.

"In one sense of the word we could have gone without a partnership with Miss., but our goal was to impact in a significant way one of the most needed parts

of our country and our world," Barnes said.

"If you circle the Baltimore beltway, which is about 45 miles, or the DC beltway, which is about 65 miles, you will see hundreds and hundreds of thousands of homes and high rise apartments and condominiums. There is no way that a convention our size can impact this dense population of the Maryland suburbs of Washington, D.C. and through the Baltimore and Annapolis areas," Barnes said.

Yet, because of the Great Commission, that is the mandate Maryland and Delaware Baptists must carry. In response, Barnes said the state convention staff has developed a highly prioritized, strategic vision for the 21st Century. They have identified strategic areas where new churches need to be planted. They have a plan for revitalizing existing congregations that have plateaued or are dying.

Jimmy Jackson is the consultant specialist for church planting with the Maryland/Delaware Convention. He is

enthusiastic about the prospects of the partnership with Mississippi.

"In Maryland/Delaware we are trying our very hardest to give birth to a church planting movement. We are interested in church planting that will grow by multiplication and not simply by addition," Jackson said.

Jackson believes that Mississippi Baptist churches, in partnership with their churches, can impact this church planting movement in a positive way.

"We want Miss. churches to be a partner with us in that, and feel that they can because of their resources and personnel. We have many places already located where we will need help for these high impact starts," he added.

Jackson pointed to a the successful partnership between Raymond Road Church in Metro Association with Harvest Church, a new start in the Maryland city of Salsbury, as an example of how such partnerships can work.

"That has been a very profitable thing for both churches, we believe. In fact, it has been such a success that the Raymond Road Baptist Church wants to actually be a sponsoring church now for a new start in early 2000 in the Frederick area of Maryland," Jackson said.

Barnes believes the partnership with Mississippi Baptists is part of God's plan for helping them achieve these goals.

"Within the next few years, I envision Maryland/Delaware Baptists having many, many new churches begun in strategic places because of our partnership with Mississippi. Also, I envision hundreds of our churches being revitalized, re-energized, to be on mission for Jesus Christ in their community, because of the assistance, the support, the encouragement of Mississippi Baptists," he said.



What to expect in Ukraine

The name means borderland. They say Ukraine, not the Ukraine. Take a Russian phrasebook. Although Ukrainian is a separate language, just about everyone you will meet can speak Russian.

Russian has 33 letters in its alphabet, so it takes a while to learn the sounds. People will re-pronounce every Russian



word you try, but they seem to appreciate the efforts.

The latitude corresponds to Maine. It gets hot in the summer, but not every day. Nights are comfortable. The food is fairly plain. Lots of potatoes and other vegetables in season. Ukraine has more topsoil than nearly any other country, so fresh veggies are everywhere. Meat is more likely pork and sausage than other kinds. If you ask about a certain kind of food, they'll try to get it for you, so don't ask unless you really need it.

Ukraine is not prepared for tourists. For instance, it's difficult to find Ukrainian tee shirts. And in some places you'll be expected to use rather unsophisticated toilet facilities. Lots of places in the summer, showers have only cold water. You can get a soft drink or ice cream anywhere for about a quarter. It's good ice cream. The exchange rate is about four Grevnas per dollar. Most places you cannot drink the tap water. In Odessa, it's because of the chemicals added to make the water clean.

These kids at community well in a small Ukrainian town are among thousands that Mississippi Baptists can reach with the Gospel during our partnership.

But the people are uniformly friendly. Even in places where they said the video crew were the first Americans ever to visit, people smiled and posed for the camera trying out whatever English words they knew.

Vessels videos now available

The fall 1999 edition of **Vessels**, Mississippi Baptists' video magazine, contains segments on three Partnership areas: Honduras, Ukraine, and Maryland/Delaware.

This video magazine is available from your director of missions, your convention board member, or from the Broadcast Services Department of the MBCB.

The video crew visited each place, bringing back colorful accounts of the countryside and glimpses of the needs that Mississippi Baptists can help fill.

Other segments on this edition of **Vessels** include a piece on the Jackson Habitat project organized by Mississippi WMU; and a two-minute witness, telling how to become a Christian.

Shortly, we expect special adaptations of the partnership videos to be available for recruiting volunteers.

that will be the central focus of Impact Northeast: (1) Starting hundreds of new churches in areas of greatest need; (2) Bearing Christian witness to young adults in colleges (over six million students on 600 campuses); (3) Revitalizing and encouraging existing Southern Baptist churches of the Northeast; and (4) Providing leadership training for pastoral and lay leaders.

Coordinator Bill Causey, former executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, will assist the states to work together effectively. Causey will work with an advisory council of three state executive directors. A steering team of the associated state executive directors will guide the efforts. Local task supervisors and mission point contacts will implement the specific action plans.

The partnership cannot be defined and confined simply to the usage of money. For example, a church in a Southern state may have a vast amount of leadership materials which can be used to bless numerous churches in the Northeast. Another example would be the involvement of a committed Baptist college professor with university officials in a Northeastern university.

Northeast Impact

On the American Christian scene, there are geographical locations where Southern Baptist life has not had the significant growth which was expected or desired. The Northeastern part of the U.S. is one of these locations. More than 24 percent of the total U.S. population resides in the northeastern states. Our Baptist witness is reaching only a minuscule portion of these people.

In the past months, state convention leaders in the Northeast and those of several older state conventions in the South have formed a partnership that could significantly enhance the Baptist witness in the Northeast. The result is the beginnings of Impact Northeast, a collaborative partnership that ties older conventions:

Mississippi, Texas, Tennessee, Alabama, North Carolina, and Virginia, with New England, New York, Pennsylvania/South Jersey, Maryland/Delaware, and the District of Columbia.

The ultimate goals are to facilitate church growth and evangelical witness in the Northeast and strengthen the mission resolve and direction in the old-line states.

Impact Northeast is designed to carry out the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus in this vital area of the U.S. Throughout the area, the partnership will

create new mission networks, expand opportunities for mission service, and enhance existing mission resources.

Compared to the rest of North America, the Northeast represents only five percent of the total land area. However, within 11 states of that area, more than 57 million people make their homes. Many of the world's financial, trade, fashion, technology, education, and entertainment centers are located in the Northeast.

The area includes an urban corridor that stretches from Washington, D.C., to Boston. Pennsylvania and New York states contain huge land areas with more than a half dozen mountain ranges. Pennsylvania has the highest rural population in America.

This area is as ethnically diverse as anywhere in the world, with well over 100 languages and dialects spoken.

In the area, what was initially the cradle of religious liberty, revitalization is a major challenge for Baptists of the Northeast and South alike.

Today there are about 1,350 Southern Baptist churches in the Northeast, one church for every 43,806 people.

Leaders of the Northeast state conventions have identified four priorities

Opportunities are unfolding with Honduras

A missions partnership with Honduras begun years ago continues in ever-changing form. High interest in medical-dental work as an avenue for church growth has continued unabated.

But that was the only official connection—until Hurricane Mitch visited Honduras and other Central American countries last October.

Mitch nearly wiped out the economy of the agricultural nation and did wipe out thousands of homes as rivers overran their banks and then overran whole villages.

Mississippi Baptists responded quickly with food and clothing. Then the great need for housing brought on newly accepted responsibilities.

The Partnership agreed to provide labor to build 237 new concrete block homes on the north coast for displaced Hondurans. That number of homes will probably be exceeded by the time we are finished. Thus far about 50 are completed or nearly so.

New responsibilities have come about as a result of Mississippi Baptists interest in medical-dental work, and an encounter by Jim Baldwin, field side coordinator for the partnership working out of the capital city of Tegucigalpa, with Mary Flake Flores, the wife of Honduras' president.

The First Lady was interested in the physical health of Honduras' children. Conversations escalated to an official document promising that Mississippi Baptists will provide health checks for the children in Tegucigalpa schools.

This opens the door for a gospel witness for all the children, distribution of Bibles and tracts, and to conduct worship services at night to include the parents.

This ministry could touch a total of 350,000 children and their families.

Two corollary ministries are being developed. Lion's Club International has 750,000 pairs of glasses in stock and is making these available to the children.

And the Gideons are readying to provide Bibles and New Testaments to all participants.

Mississippi Baptist Partnership Missions
is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Office of Communication.



LETTER IS DISTURBING

Editor:

Recently, I was very disturbed over a letter I read in The Baptist Record. In this letter, a pastor denounced the proposed 2000 budget because of its support for Christian education in Mississippi. As a ministerial student at one of our Baptist colleges, I found this particularly offensive. I know firsthand how important Christian education is.

Before attending Blue Mountain, I attended another college in the state. It was affiliated with another denomination, yet Christian principles were not taught nor endorsed. At Blue Mountain College, I have Christian professors who have incredible character and who hold forth the truths of Scripture. When will we realize that a

liberal arts education does not mean that the education is liberal? Instead, a liberal arts education opens us up to a wide spectrum of subjects which allow us to relate credibly with others. Such an education exemplifies the words of the apostle Paul who said, "I am made all things to all men" (1 Corinthians 9:22). Baptist colleges in Mississippi provide a Biblical foundation to ministers, so that they can minister more effectively.

If it were not for resources provided by Mississippi Baptists, many men would not be able to develop their talents and gifts. Therefore, I want to thank Mississippi Baptists for allowing us to continue our training in the Lord's work, and I hope they will continue to support us.

Reggie L. Bridges
Ashland

REVIVAL DATES

Shiloh (Carroll): Oct. 31-Nov. 3; Sunday, 11 a.m. with week-night services at 7 p.m.; Leon Holly, Vaiden, speaker; Joey Ingram, Montgomery County, music; Doug Warren, pastor.

First, Stonewall: Oct. 24-29; 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m., Sunday through Friday; Clay Chancelor, Stonewall, evangelist; The Brad Jones Family, Meridian, music; Mike Powell, pastor.

Palestine, Raymond: Oct. 31-Nov. 3; Sunday, homecoming and beginning of revival, 11 a.m., dinner served following services and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Bill Causey, Clinton, speaker; Billy Causey, Raymond Church, Raymond, music.

Second, Greenville: Nov. 7-10; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Jim Futral, executive director, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, evangelist; Scott Brooks, Greenville, music; Richard G. Gordon, pastor.

Tuscumbia, Booneville: Nov. 15-19; 7 p.m. nightly; David Westmoreland, Pontotoc, evangelist; Jason Pilcher, pastor.

Darlove, Hollandale: Nov. 7-10; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Charles E. Smith Jr., Duncan, guest speaker; David Tribble, Greenville, music; Ron Roberts, pastor.

Southside, Benoit: Nov. 7-12; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Jim Hill family, evangelists, Michael Bird, pastor.

Park Haven, Laurel: Nov. 7-10; Sunday, kickoff at 3 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Alan Balliet, evangelist; Alton Robinson, music.

be faithful stewards. Thank you for your commitment to CP and for your willingness to promote the 75th Anniversary of CP through Partners in the Harvest.

It is my heart's desire to help Southern Baptists envision the great need to reach the entire world for Christ. I look forward to all that God has in store for us as we work in the common bond of Christ, empowered by his spirit, to share the Gospel of our Savior to the unreached people around the world.

Morris Chapman, president
SBC Executive Committee
Nashville

LAMBERT KIN SOUGHT

Editor:

I am searching for Roger Lambert, son of P. I. and Sylvia Lambert. Plez Lambert served in the Business Office of the Kentucky Baptist Convention during the late 1940's. We have discovered a box of family letters written by Sylvia to her husband, after she and son Roger moved to Mississippi. If Roger or any ancestor is located in Mississippi they may have this correspondence. Write to me at: Kentucky Baptist Convention, P. O. Box 43433, Louisville, KY 40253-0433.

Cheryl M. Doty, Archivist
Kentucky Baptist Convention
Louisville, Ky.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

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RECORD CP GIVING

Editor:

Greetings to you in our Savior's mighty name. I praise him for the sixth consecutive year of record giving through the Cooperative Program (CP).

The Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) received and distributed \$167,996,385 surpassing last year by \$8.41 million and our CP Allocation Budget for 1998-99 by \$12.99 million. The funds received over the CP Allocation Budget have been distributed to retire the 1999-2000 Capital Needs Budget of \$3,151,520 a year earlier than planned with the remaining balance of \$9,839,142 distributed to Ministry Advance according to the CP distribution percentage.

This has been an extraordinary year in our denomination. Southern Baptists continued to

Jonathan Pope Evans of Falkville, Ala. (left) and Joseph Brack of Whitman, Mass. (right) are shown here in the William Carey College Theatre production of "Crow and

Weasel" by Jim Leonard Jr. The production will be presented Oct. 21-23 at 8 p.m. on the Hattiesburg campus. For reservations and information call the box office at (601) 582-6221.



Evans and Brack



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MUSIC MANUAL PRINTED

Editor:

Church Music R.F.D. is a practical music handbook designed primarily for bivocational music directors and pastors. It has proven to be a concise guide yet a comprehensive resource for full-time ministers as well.

This manual is a textbook in several Baptist colleges. It is a reference source for seminaries and music missionaries around the world. This year Church Music R.F.D. celebrates 20 years of ministry to over 35,000 bivocational music ministries in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Dan Hall had a dream when he came from the Music Department in Nashville in 1964 to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board as director of our Church Music Department. He spoke to Earl Kelly about publishing a book to help train bivocational music directors in Mississippi's small churches.

In 1975 Hall organized a team to begin the creating of such a manual. After four (4) years of praying, planning, writing, edit-

ing, and organizing Church Music R.F.D. was published in March 1979 by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

Church Music R.F.D. is now in its fifth printing. The sale of the manual adequately pays for every printing. It would not have continued to be printed without the continued support of L. Graham Smith, director of the Church Music Department. He has a love for the small churches in Mississippi also. Selah!

Jimmy McCaleb
Clinton

MS BAPTISTS PLEASED

Editor:

In response to your June 24 editorial about attendance at the SBC in Atlanta, I think most Southern Baptists are pleased with the present work and direction of the convention. Thus, they stayed at home to deal with local matters. (I personally attended most of the convention and really enjoyed it.)

This same idea also explains

why no Mississippians were on the program (May 27 editorial), I think. I personally know of three state pastors who usually attend the convention but stayed at home this time to be a part of important ministries in their own churches (VBS, for example). I commend them for doing so.

The Southern Baptist Convention was formed in the first place to do mission work. This continues to be our main duty.

Increasing participation in serving as missionaries and giving financially to mission causes tells me we are on the right track.

Bruce M. Jones
Columbus

KOSOVO BLANKETED

Editor:

I would like to thank each and every church in your state for the tremendous efforts exerted and for the love shown in the "Blanket Kosovo with God's Love" project. I just wish I could thank each one personally.

I know for many this ministry project was added responsibility on top of an already busy end-of-summer schedule. Thank you so much for helping provide God's love to so many in Kosovo who really need to understand the fact that God does love them very much? Please share our thanks with those in your state.

It was such a great joy to see the Lord working through so many people so quickly. I am a firm believer that as long as word is provided to Southern Baptists, they will always be ready to respond, and to respond quickly.

We shipped over 36,000 blankets to Kosovo! We received so many blankets that we are having to use over 12 40' containers. The warehouse in Richmond was bulging at the seams with blankets coming in from across the U.S.

We will make sure everyone receives information on the actual blanket distribution process as it unfolds in Kosovo. I was told the blankets should be arriving in Kosovo by late October.

Thank you again. (Heb. 6:10)
Jim Brown
International Mission Board

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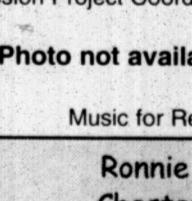
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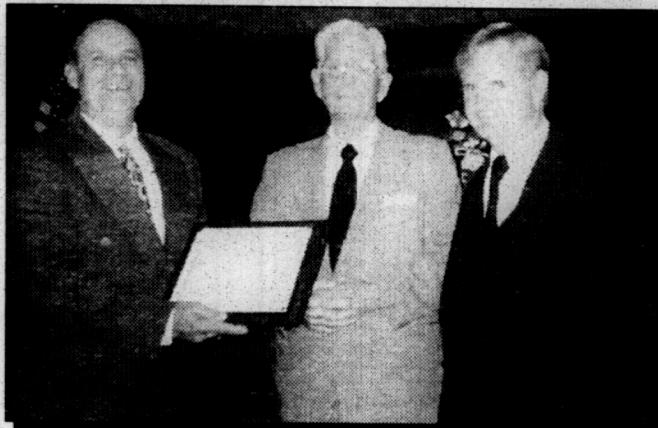
PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC. Send resume to: Music Search Committee, c/o Eastwood Baptist Church, P.O. Box 466, Indianola, MS 38751. Call 601-887-4404.

PART-TIME MINISTER OF YOUTH. Send resume to East Columbia Baptist Church, 385 Columbia/Purvis Road, Columbia, MS 39429. Call 601-736-2683.

PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC. Montrose Baptist Church, Jasper County. For more information, call 787-3194.

JUST FOR THE RECORD

Byram Church, Metro Association, was recognized on June 27 by the Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission for its 175th anniversary. Homecoming was held with former members participating in the services. Pictured in the presentation of the plaque (from left) are Charles Nikolic, youth and recreation director, Metro Association; H. J. Bennett, former pastor; and Roy Maine Jr., present pastor.



Nikolic, Bennett, Maine

Paid In Full, a Gospel singing group from New Albany, will host their 8th annual homecoming concert at First Church, New Albany, on Oct. 23 and Oct. 24 at 6:30 p.m. nightly. For more information, call the church at (662) 534-5812.



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WANTED: MISSIONARY-MINDED couple to serve the Lord in a home caring for children needing a place to live. This evangelical organization has been meeting the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of children for 103 years. Not a behavior modification facility. Competitive salary and other compensations which include housing, food, insurance, and retirement. Call Mr. Taylor at Palmer Home for Children (601) 328-5216.

Marriage Enrichment Seminar will be held at Ethel Church, Ethel, Oct. 22 and 23. The conference will begin at 7 p.m. on Friday and 9 a.m. on Saturday. Roger Carlisle, minister of counseling at Northcrest Church will lead the conference. For more information, call the church at (662) 674-5204. Chester Carlisle is pastor.

PSALTY & FRIENDS LIVE, a children's musical, will be

appearing at Northcrest Church, Meridian, Oct. 22, for one show only. Doors open at 6 p.m. and show time is at 7 p.m. Admission is \$5 per person taken at the door. For group reservations and information, call (601) 482-3498.

Harvest Day will be held at Good Hope Church, Lena, on Oct. 24. Activities will include Sunday School at 10 a.m., worship at 11 a.m., and lunch to follow. Wayne McGee, pastor, will bring the message.

Hallelujah Festival will be held at First Church, Pearl, on Oct. 30 from 5-7 p.m. For more information, call the church office at (601) 939-4476.



Morgan Chapel, Sturgis, held its GA Recognition Service on Aug. 28. Pictured (from left, front row) are Bailey McMinn, Keali Fulgham, Lankin Vickers, and Tia Vickers; (second row) Kyla Morgan, Neshay Vickers, and Katie Lewis; (third row) Cia Kinnard, Sommer Reeves, Hailey Reeves, Whitney Morgan, and Casey Risher; (back row) Shelia Morgan, Amy Morgan, Mae Morgan, Dawn Kinnard, Ellen Shaw, Jamie Lewis, and Tracey Risher.

First Church, Mize, will be presenting Judgment House, an alternative to Halloween and the notorious haunted house. Judgment House is a realistic walk-through drama about where you will spend eternity. It will be held Oct. 24 from 6-10 p.m.; Oct. 27 and 28 from 7-10

p.m.; and October 30 from 6 p.m.-2 a.m. For reservations or information, call (601) 733-2233.

Parkhaven Church, Laurel, will host the Magnolia Boys in concert on Oct. 30 at 7 p.m. For information, call (601) 425-2150.



Women on Mission volunteers from First Church, Kosciusko, shared God's love with golfers and spectators at the U.S. Women's Open Golf Tournament in West Point as they served ice water from the water oasis on hole 4. Pictured in the prayer room prior to departure for Old Waverly are: (seated, from left) Catherine Ferguson; Kelly Middleton; and Effie Jones; (standing, from left) George Ellen Chandler; Kathy Burns, Mississippi WMU consultant; and Sue Dorrill.

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2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (**I repent.**)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (**I believe in Jesus.**)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him. (**I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.**)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

Shared faith

Deuteronomy 6:1-9, 20-24

By Jerry L. Smith

I had been a Christian for a week when I shared Christ for the first time. I told a classmate at college how Jesus had come into my heart, forgiven me of my sin, and made me a new person. I told my friend that Jesus wanted to perform the same miracle of salvation in his life if only he would extend him an invitation.

My friend rejected Christ's offer of eternal life, but that experience didn't dampen my enthusiasm for sharing the gospel.

Have you ever shared your faith? Do you talk to people about their eternal home? Today's passage from

Deuteronomy will show us how to live a vibrant faith and share that faith with others without fear.

Intelligent faith (vv. 1-3). God's Word tells us how to live abundantly. That's the meaning of Deut. 6:3, "Keep my laws so that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily."

Emphasize the abundant life when sharing your faith. Communicate to your unsaved friend or family member that the Bible is filled with practical truths for day-to-day living. Hopefully, this will open their eyes to the relevancy of the gospel.

Heartfelt faith (vv. 6-7). Do you genuinely love God, or are



Smith

you just going through the motions? Unbelievers see through our lack of commitment.

God required the Israelites to love him with all their heart, soul, and might. He requires the same from us. A salesman can't market a product he doesn't believe in, and a Christian can't communicate a faith that is not reflected in his lifestyle. If you're going to share your faith, make sure it's authenticated in your speech, actions, and deeds. Nothing turns a person off more than a "phony."

Verbal faith (vv. 6-7). God advised the Israelites to talk about their faith. We should do the same. Share your faith over dinner, in the workplace, or during times of recreation. Did you know that only 5% of all Christians have ever won anybody to the Lord? If we truly

love Jesus, we'll talk about him.

When's the last time you asked someone, "If you were to die today, do you know where you'd spend eternity?" We talk about our jobs, our kids, and our hobbies—why not our faith?

Symbols of faith (vv. 8-9). Sometimes, exhibiting a symbol of our faith can help introduce the gospel. For the Israelites, a symbol of their faith was a phylactery. These were small boxes or cases worn on the wrist or forehead that contained portions of scripture.

Today, we wear crosses around our necks, put Christian bumper stickers on our cars, and have Christian logos on our T-shirts. These visual aids can be used to communicate our faith.

Put a fish symbol on your business card or place a Bible on your office desk. Don't be ashamed to let people know you belong to Jesus, but make sure that your lifestyle doesn't

contradict the symbol.

Meaningful faith (vv. 20-24). God encouraged the Israelites to share their faith through personal testimony. Their testimony recounted the miracles God performed in Egypt and how he delivered them from bondage.

A personal testimony can be an excellent tool for sharing your faith. You don't have to know the "Roman Road" or the "4 Spiritual Laws" to witness effectively. Just communicate your salvation experience and explain what Jesus has done for you.

People are looking for authentic believers. If you're genuinely saved and compassionately concerned for others, then sharing your faith should be as natural as breathing.

Decide today that you are going to be a part of the 5% that have led someone to Jesus.

Smith is pastor of First Church, Summit.

LIFE AND WORK

Experiencing spiritual breakthrough by repentance

Ps. 51:1-12, 15-17

By Tom Atwood

What must we do to experience spiritual breakthrough? When many in our churches lack the kind of commitment that brings profound change, what are they to do? How is one's faith renewed? How is one's absence of faith repented of and the faith received? How does one apply repentance and renewal personally and in marriage and family life?

Acknowledge your sin (vv. 1-6). Based upon God's unfailing love and compassion, David, the psalmist, acknowledged his sin and sought God's forgiveness. His sin was serious. David had committed adultery with Bathsheba

and committed murder in causing the death of her husband, Uriah.

All sin is serious! Sins differ in their degree of personal and social damage but they are all sin to God. All sin separates persons from God. All sin obscures the spiritual vision of believers and obliterates fellowship with Christ.

David confesses, not only the act of sin, but also the nature to sin from birth. The word of God had come through Nathan the prophet and David concurs: "You are proved right when you speak" (v. 4). All sin is ultimately against God (v. 4a) and David had been feeling the full weight of his guilt: "For I know



Atwood

my transgressions; and my sin is always before me." Acknowledgement is always a critical early step in seeking removal of sin's guilt.

Seek the removal of your sin (vv. 51: 7-9). Confession brings cleansing. David knows this well and it is reflected in his cry to God: "cleanse me...wash me...blot out all my iniquity." His sin had obscured the face of his God. His heart was under the burden of guilt which needed forgiveness and the presence of sin in David's life needed God's cleansing.

1 John 1:9 rings the same bell: "If we confess our sins, he...will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." The guilt of sin must be dealt with by forgiveness, the presence of sin by cleansing. Guilt is but the fruit of sin. The root of sin is a powerful reality that must be cleansed, washed out of a life.

David knew that if God cleansed him, he would be truly clean. David's plea for God to cleanse him with hyssop shows great insight into spiritual cleansing. Hyssop was used to apply the blood from a sacrificed lamb at the Passover (Ex. 12:22) and at the ritual connected with the cleansing of a leper (Lev. 14:4,6,49,51-52). John tells us that the blood of the ultimate lamb, Jesus Christ, cleanses from all sin (1 John 1:7).

Trust God for renewal (vv. 51:10-12). In order to live in harmony and fellowship with God, David asks for four things: 1) a pure heart. If the heart is the seat of the will, he is asking God to purify his motives so his choices will reflect righteousness. 2) A steadfast spirit. The double-minded man is unstable in all he does (James 1:8). Faithfulness requires steadfastness. 3) The Joy of Salvation. The worst publicity for the kingdom is a Christian without

joy. Joy is essential for worship, witness, and a credible expression of God's word. 4) A willing spirit. David says that he is sustained by a willing spirit. God owns our wills and he works to make us willing and yielded vessels in which he will demonstrate his grace now and glory to come.

Maintain a lifestyle of repentance (vv. 51:15-17). In David's heart there was a deep desire to honor God. David's lips would flow with praise for the goodness and mercy of the Lord. He knew that God was not impressed with external religious rituals and rules, but rather, a broken spirit and a contrite heart. Many fail to experience spiritual breakthrough because of an unrepentant lifestyle. Not merely a one-time act, it is a continuing posture of conviction, confession, cleansing, and change.

Atwood is pastor of First Church, Oxford.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Rebelling against God

Numbers 10:11-14:45

By Sylvia Fleming

Constant complaining and distrust in the Lord, lust and jealousy intermingled, were conditions of those under the leadership of Moses.

With Moses following God's command, he chose 12 vigorous men to send into Canaan to appraise it, looking at the land, its people, and its cities. Were the cities just camps or were they fortresses? Was the land heavily settled? What were the resources located in the land?

God knew those answers, but wished to provide assurance for his people. So the twelve went to Hebron on the spy mission, returning to Kadesh-Barnea with grapes, pomegranates, and



Fleming

varying opinions. The land surely "floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it" (13:27), but there were giants in that land and ten of the twelve spies were frightened to death.

Apparently, there were three clans holding Hebron: all descendants of Anak. "We saw the children...there. The Amalekites, dwell in the land of the Negev; and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the edge of Jordan" (13: 28b-29).

The Israelites had forgotten the faithfulness of God and his promises. "I will bring you...out of...Egypt unto the

lands of the Canaanites, Hittites, the Amorites, Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exodus 3:17). This promise was part of the original Abrahamic Covenant.

God was well aware of the "giants" and circumstances his people would encounter; however, he never makes a promise that he cannot deliver. According to Psalm 37:5, man is to "Commit [his] way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass."

In the presence of Moses, Caleb attempted to quieten the ten frightened spies by saying, "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (13:30). The men, however, refused to listen, referring to themselves as grasshoppers when compared to those dwelling in the land of Canaan.

What should have been a glo-

rious celebration turned into a night of weeping and wailing, with the two faithful tearing their clothes, trying to reason with mob mentality. "The land, which we passed through...is a very good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us..." (14:7b-8).

Both Caleb and Joshua remembered the promise God had made to their people and begged them not to rebel against God. The Israelites responded by seeking to stone the two. Had it not been for the appearance of the Shekinah Glory (God's visible presence), they would have killed both Joshua and Caleb.

Moses listened to God in his anger and began to intercede for the people, appealing to God from the viewpoint of the enemy: "The Egyptians will hear and will declare you are an impotent God."

God responded, saying those present had seen God's glory and had been disobedient, test-

ing him repeatedly, "Surely they shall not see the land which I swore to give unto their fathers..." (14:23). By sending a plague upon them, only two people 20 years of age and above would be allowed into the Promised Land, saying their "Carcasses [would] fall in [the] wilderness..." (14:29). The people in their rebelliousness would not be allowed to remain and influence the younger men.

God responded to Moses' selflessness, determining the course of that nation by effective, fervent prayer (James 5:16) which did avail much.

Less than two years out of Egypt, they were almost home. However, their rebelliousness and lack of faith caused them to wander a total of 40 years. Rest can only come when cradled in the everlasting arms of God who is the refuge for the wandering, weary, the tired (Deut. 33:27).

Fleming is a member of Bond Church, Neshoba Association.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of **The Village View** is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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1-30, 1999

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Medal recipients credit Christ in documentary

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — Mitchell Paige was a sergeant in charge of a platoon of machine gunners on Guadalcanal during World War II. There was little opposition as they stormed the beaches, but only days later Paige and the 32 men in his platoon faced an enemy attack led by Japanese troops numbering almost 3,000. When the fighting ended, Paige was the only one in his platoon still standing.

He had continued the barrage even as each soldier around him fell. A soldier found him the next morning with a small Bible open to Proverbs 3:5, remembering his mother's guidance of six years earlier: "Son, all I want you to do is trust in God. Don't try to figure everything out and God will show you the way."

Paige is one of about a dozen Medal of Honor recipients profiled in a new documentary produced by the broadcast communications group of the North American Mission Board (NAMB). Titled "Valor," the program will be available for broadcast on local ABC network affiliates beginning Oct. 17. ABC stations that choose to air the program have until mid-December to do so.

The television special is one of two produced each year by NAMB for broadcast by network affiliates of ABC and NBC, which determine whether to air

them and when. Recent such efforts have included this summer's "Hoop Heroes" profiling Christians in the National Basketball Association, last year's "Driving Force" on Christian NASCAR drivers, and the Billy Graham biography "Common Ground."

Producer Bernie Hargis said he developed the idea for highlighting the faith of war heroes because of the popularity of movies like "Saving Private Ryan" and Tom Brokaw's book, "The Greatest Generation."

"If you're looking for heroes, you won't find better ones than the men who have

received the Medal of Honor," he said, noting that the timing also seemed right. "The ones from World War II are into their 80s now, so we felt we shouldn't delay."

The special opens with Walter Ehlers — the only living Medal of Honor winner from the D-Day invasion — walking along the beach in Normandy where he had fought so many years earlier.

His act of heroism began 23 miles inland, when after eliminating a German patrol he scattered an enemy mortar section, destroyed two machine gun nests, and later provided cover for his troops to withdraw. He also carried a wounded member of his squad to safety after being shot in the side himself, and chose to continue to lead his squad rather than be evacuated for treatment.

Similar stories are repeated throughout the special, ending with each acknowledging the profound role their faith had played — either during their war experiences or because of them.

"They all describe themselves as ordinary soldiers, sailors, pilots, or whatever, who had one moment in which they were called upon to do something extraordinary," Hargis said. "And they attribute that of course to God and to their faith in Christ."

(For information on broadcast dates and times or to request favorable scheduling, contact your local ABC station.)



IN HONOR — Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Coolidge visited the park named in his honor in Chattanooga, Tenn., nearly 55 years after the former U.S. Army sergeant's Medal of Honor-winning act of heroism. In October of 1944, Coolidge was credited with leading a small band of soldiers as they beat back German attacks for four days in France. Coolidge story is one of several told in "Valor," a documentary produced by the North American Mission Board for broadcast by ABC television stations beginning Oct. 17. "But it was not that hill that stood out so much to me as the hill on Calvary where Christ was crucified, that promised eternal life." (NAMB Photo)

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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ZJU CXDI GXZMM
QZJUDB KBEV GDZ CE
GDZ, ZJU KBEV CXD
JEBCX DODJ CE CXD
DZGC, CXDI GXZMM BFJ
CE ZJU KBE CE GDDW
CXD QEBU EK CXD
MEBU, ZJU GXZMM JEC
KTJU TC.
ZVEG DTLXC: CQDMOD

Clue: Q = W

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Hosea Fourteen: Two.

Media alarm lacking in Wedgewood tragedy

FORT WORTH, Tex. (BP) — Does the failure of news media and national leaders to label the murders at Wedgewood Church a "hate crime" represent a double standard? In the weeks after the mid-September tragedy, a variety of observers have raised the issue.

One of the sharpest criticisms appeared in the New York Post. Columnist Rod Dreher noted the outcry that greeted previous attacks at a Los Angeles Jewish center and the murders of a homosexual student, Matthew Shepherd, in Wyoming and an African American man, James Byrd, in Texas.

When gunman Larry Gene Ashbrook targeted Christians in the Fort Worth church's sanctuary, it was a hate crime, Dreher wrote.

"To so many media figures, Christians — specifically evangelicals, orthodox Catholics, and others who believe in traditional Judeo-Christian moral teaching — are not victims, but victimizers," he added. "They are so used to casting Southern Baptists and fellow travelers as buffoons and bigots that they find it hard to imagine them as anything but."

In a recent radio program, Prison Fellowship founder Charles Colson commented on how Ashbrook shouted profane epithets and mocked Christian beliefs when he entered the sanctuary. Yet, most reporters

insisted on calling his motives a mystery, he said.

Colson questioned whether the crime would have been

explained away as the actions of a madman if Ashbrook had shot up a gay bar or abortion clinic.

There is a danger to such

views, Colson said. He warned that if one group can be singled out without consequences, then no one in society is safe.



LifeAnswers

Ron Mabry, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

Our youngest daughter is married. My husband and I now have the entire house to ourselves. He stays busy but I am here by myself. I am very lonely. Any suggestions?

You and your husband now have more time and money than at any other point in your marriage, but the two of you have grown apart. Talk with your husband about this new time in your life. It is time for a reevaluation of your goals and direction? What are some things that you both would find exciting? What are some new things you would like to start at this point in your life? If you cannot talk together, find a good confidant, friend, or counselor who can help you find the necessary outlets to bring the joy you are seeking.

Seek the Lord and find reassurance in his Word — but not as a substitute for marital needs. This is a new point of beginning again with each other. Use it successfully, or you will fill it with something else — something which will leave you at this same point once it is gone.

Can you help me tell the signs of a partner who is having an extramarital affair?

Each situation is different, but here are some things to look for:

◆ Partner cannot be located for several hours.

◆ Excuses enlarge (cell phone went dead, running errands, "I told the office; they just misunderstood," got caught talking with an old friend, etc.).

◆ Change in presentation (weight loss, hair color/length/style, new clothes).

◆ Easily irritated. Anger is more rampant. Distance during conversations and avoidance of deep subjects.

◆ Moving away physically. Low sex drive, unapproachable, not interested, sexual dysfunction.

◆ Stays away more. Works late hours, takes more frequent trips.

Be patient. If your partner is committing adultery, his/her sin will find them out. Do not become a nag or try to "fix" your partner. Pray for your partner and your marriage that God will reign supreme, and that God will intervene and convict your partner as well as you to be the person he created you to be.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.